

*mulina scopula*, any more than his *Haliphysema echinoides* represents *Wyvillethomsonia Wallichii*. So it is evident from this that, in attempting to generalize,

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.”

*Squamulina scopula* in its simple and branched forms is very common on this coast (Buddleigh-Salterton, Devon); but if reexamined, as Mereschkowsky suggests a little further on in the same number of the ‘Annals’ (p. 77), it is impossible to do away with the bearing of the polythalamous character above mentioned, which no sponge that I know of possesses, independent of the other proofs that *Squamulina scopula* is decidedly a species of Foraminifera.

The embryo of the Spongida grows up into branches from a *root*; that of the Foraminifera from a *cell* into cells or chambers, successively increasing in size and, for the most part, arranged spirally. Thus far the two organisms *cannot* be confounded.

## XXI.—Description of a new *Scops Owl* from Ceylon.

By Capt. W. V. LEGGE, R.A., M.B.O.U., &c.

AT Trincomalie, in July 1875, I obtained a young bird belonging to a small species of *Scops Owl* unknown to me. I kept it some little time; and it then died. In May of the following year, while staying with Mr. Bligh, of Catton Estate, Haputale, I met with a skin of an adult bird, which he had caught in the chimney of his bungalow at Kotmalie, and which I recognized as belonging to the same species as my young bird. Its small size and dark plumage prevented my identifying it with any *Scops Owl* described in Mr. Sharpe’s Catalogue; and through the kindness of Mr. Bligh I was enabled to send it home to the British Museum. It has now been presented to the national collection by that gentleman.

Messrs. Whyte and Co., of Kandy, have just sent home to Mr. Sharpe, on loan, a second example, killed in one of the coffee-districts near Kandy. On our comparing the series thus obtained with the *Scops Owls* in the national collection, this species turns out to be new, being distinguished from other Indian members of the genus by its small size and dark colour. Messrs. Whyte and Co. state they have received once before an example of this owl\*. I

\* I have examined a small rufous owl in the Colombo Museum, which appears to belong to this species.

propose to describe this interesting little addition to the avifauna of Ceylon under the name of *Scops minutus*, it appearing to be the smallest *Scops Owl* yet discovered.

*Scops minutus*, sp. nov.

*Description*.—♂. Length to front of cere (from skin) 6·0 inches; culmen 0·55; wing 4·85; tail 2·1; tarsus 0·8; outer anterior toe 0·7, its claw straight 0·4; height of bill at cere 0·25.

Iris yellow; bill olivaceous brown; cere greenish; feet fleshy brown.

Above the general hue is dark brown, the feathers of the head, back, rump, scapulars, tertials, and wing-coverts crossed at the centre with transverse spots of ochraceous, spotted finely and closely vermiculated on the rest of their surfaces with grey and ochraceous grey, surrounding transverse irregular markings of blackish; the feathers of the hind neck are crossed with bold wavy markings of whitish, and margined with rufescent buff. The outer scapulars are white externally, with blackish terminal spots and oblique central bars of the same, edged with rufous; the primary and outer secondary coverts have their dark markings mingled with rufous patches and set off with white spots near the tips of the outer webs; primaries and secondaries brownish rufous, mottled with blackish brown, and the inner webs banded broadly with the same; the outer webs of the first five primaries crossed with five white blackish-margined bars, the tip paler than the rest of the feather and mottled with dark brown; tail brownish, washed with rufous on some of the feathers near the base, mottled with blackish brown and crossed with five or six bars of buff-white with black edges; ear-tufts concolorous with the head, and rufous at the base of the feathers.

Loreal plumes black, with white bases; facial disk grey, pencilled with blackish; ruff pale rufous, the feathers edged and centred with dark brown; chin whitish; fore neck and under surface, with the flanks, closely stippled with iron-grey on a white ground, the feathers with broadish central stripes of blackish, and crossed on their concealed portions with fine, wavy, transverse, black marks; on the lower parts the stippling is more open, the under tail-coverts being chiefly white, with the markings confined to the tips; legs rufescent, with wavy brown transverse marks; under wing-coverts whitish, shaded with rufescent, and crossed with irregular markings of brown.

The example sent home by Messrs. Whyte and Co., of Kandy, differs in the bolder nature of the transverse white spottings on the upper surface, and in the blackish markings taking the form of distinct shaft-lines; the ruff is more conspicuously edged, and is of a deeper buff than in the Museum specimen; the under surface is not so closely stippled, and does not present the same "pepper-and-salt" appearance, the markings taking the form of vermiculations and the centre stripes being very bold.

This little owl comes nearer to *Scops malayanus* than any other Indian member of the genus, but differs from it in its smaller size and in the darker upper parts and closely stippled under surface.

In its young plumage, it is rufous on the entire upper surface, and the breast is whiter than in the adult.

*Habitat.* Northern, western, and central provinces of Ceylon, probably the whole island.

Type in British Museum.

*Locality.* Kotmalie, Central Province.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

*White's Natural History of Selborne.* Edited by THOMAS BELL, F.R.S. Two vols. 8vo. Van Voorst: London, 1877.

A PERIOD of well nigh a century has now elapsed since the first publication of Gilbert White's 'Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne,' in 1789; and since then, as we all know, many reprints of this popular work have been from time to time issued, enriched or otherwise, as the case may be, by the notes and commentaries of various editors. With this, all might be supposed to have been done that could be done, and that nothing more was left for us to look forward to than a repetition of the same kind of editorial labour. It is with pleasure, however, that we find such a surmise dissipated entirely by the appearance of the two goodly volumes now before us, which, containing as they do so much new matter regarding our author, may be fairly enough regarded as constituting the one *final* and *exhaustive* record to which all must refer who would know something more of White, not only as a naturalist, but in his more intimate social relations with his family and friends. Hitherto we have had to be content with the meagre though kindly notice prefixed to the edition of White's work published after his death by his friend Dr. Aiken, and consisting of little more than the dates of his birth and educational career at school and college. Now, here was plainly a deficiency to be supplied; and upon whom, we may well ask, could such a task have better devolved than upon the